



## **Columbia-Snake River System Stakeholders to Explore Midwest Collaboration, Establish Relationships on Upcoming Mississippi River Tour**

(Ritzville, Wash., June 18, 2024) Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) and other Columbia-Snake River System advocates will be participating in a Mississippi River Tour June 24-28 to understand the challenges other river systems face and how they are investing in those systems to keep them in good working order now and for the future.

Joining WAWG Executive Director Michelle Hennings are representatives from Port of Lewiston, Shaver Transportation, Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, Columbia River Pilots, and American Cruise Lines. The group represents a broad cross section of Columbia-Snake River System users and industries that depend on this critical infrastructure, also known as Marine Highway 84 or M-84.

“It is vitally important that we collaborate and work with other river user groups across the U.S., as they face many of the same challenges we do, such as funding to maintain system infrastructure, misleading lawsuits that impede river operations, and extreme climate events that negatively impact river traffic,” Hennings said. “This trip is an opportunity to establish relationships across the country and pool our shared knowledge and experiences to better protect our river systems.”

Several of the other Pacific Northwest participants in the tour shared their thoughts about the upcoming trip. Port of Lewiston General Manager Scott Corbitt shared he is looking forward to the trip, “I am excited to learn more about commerce on the Mississippi River and the ports that make it happen. We can learn a lot from each other, especially regarding the challenges to river navigation and barging. I am very excited for the opportunity.”

Columbia River Pilots President Jeremy Nielsen said, “This trip is an opportunity to understand the uniqueness of each river system as well as sharing concerns common to both systems. My hope is this will lead to future political collaboration aiding to protect and strengthen our river transportation systems.”

“Our organization is looking forward to this opportunity to forge new partnerships and learn from the maritime sector along the Mississippi River. This opportunity is a moment to elevate and highlight the importance of both our inland waterway systems,” said Pacific Northwest Waterways Association’s Anthony Peña.

During the five-day trip, the Columbia-Snake River System group will give a presentation at an Upper Mississippi River Association meeting; visit one of the locks on the Mississippi, tour several ports at the southern end of the system, and visit the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ dam and levee simulation model and museum in Vicksburg, Miss.

**Media Availability:** To schedule an interview or for more information, contact Michelle Hennings, 509-659-0610 or email [michelle@wawg.org](mailto:michelle@wawg.org).

About WAWG: Education and outreach are the heart of Washington Association of Wheat Growers activity, all of which is aimed at helping Washington wheat families. Since 1954, WAWG has been dedicated to the enrichment of the Washington wheat industry as a nonprofit trade association, which depends on volunteers, membership dues and donations to carry out activities as representatives on the state and national levels. WAWG monitors state, transportation, research and natural resources policy and partners with the National Association of Wheat Growers to monitor national farm policy. Visit [wawg.org](http://wawg.org) for more information.